

LOWELL THOMAS SUNOCO BROADCAST  
Friday, June 17, 1932

CONVENTION

Good Evening, Everybody:

Here we are back East again. Came by train, not by elephant. We left the good old elephant in Chicago, left him waving his trunk, a trifle breathless and bewildered but still trumpeting. For on the whole that famous animal seems quite pleased with itself.

Anyhow, the G.O.P. elephant certainly has given folks plenty to talk about. And never did I hear opinions more divided than I did on the train coming across Pennsylvania today. The out-and-out wets are growling. The moderate dries are chortling. The bone-drys are licking their wounds.

Meanwhile the impartial observers are observing that the wets are all wet. (As Walter Lippmann and others now point out, the G.O.P. plank on Prohibition, as finally adopted, was a defeat for the dries. Under a smoke screen of dry slogans, the Republican party actually has abandoned Prohibition.) So there you are.

Let's leave them to fight it out while we go along to something else. Let's see what the big wide world is doing.

One of the things I like about these Chicago assignments is the chance they give me to see something of the rest of the country. In Pennsylvania, for instance, I found the folks doing something practical in the way of finding both work and food for the unemployed. The "back to the land" movement is taking on concrete shape in Pennsylvania. Big Thrift Gardens are springing up in places where until recently there was nothing but waste ground. In the shadow of the great Pittsburgh steel mills, virgin swamps are being made into huge truck farms. Mechanics, clerks, railroaders and other skilled workmen are turning back to the soil and making it produce nourishment for their families.

In other parts of Allegheny County, garden plots are being assigned to unemployed men and women. They are being numbered by the hundreds. And from the Harrisburg Patriot we learn that there is a measure afoot to provide state funds to help more and more people to help themselves in this encouraging fashion.



You may have heard rumors of politicians so tricky that they will steal even the City Hall. And it is a matter of record that there were denizens of the underworld who made a specialty of selling the Brooklyn Bridge to visitors for a mere pittance.

Well, I just heard of an exploit something like that being pulled off in the neighborhood of Pittsburgh. It seems the country built a sixty-foot bridge over one of the side roads out there in western Pennsylvania. At any rate, the taxpayers paid for the construction of such a bridge.

But here's the story. Today they can't find the bridge. They have been holding an investigation. They have been asking county employees and residents. And nobody knows what has happened to that darn bridge.

So if you happen to have a stray bridge concealed about your person or on your premises, you'd better get rid of it. In the language of the police, that bridge is "hot" and you can't tell when the authorities from western Pennsylvania will come snooping around your backyard.

If people are that clever, I'm liable to wake up one morning and find somebody has run away with my concrete tennis court.



When the train stopped at Trenton, my friends of the Trenton Evening Times enabled me to give you some of the latest highlights of the world's news.

In Washington the travel-stained troops of the Bonus Army laid seige to the Senate today in a last ditch fight. (The greatest crowd of veterans ever seen on Capitol Hill jammed the galleries for the debate over the two billion four hundred million Patman Bonus Bill. Senators had a hard time getting to their seats. Some of the expeditionary forces had slept all night in the corridors of the Senate Office Building as well as in the corridors of the Big Capitol Building.)

"Stay here until hell freezes over," cried Representative Blanton of Texas, by way of encouragement to the boys. "You'll get the bonus before you quit."

It was a demonstration unparalleled in the history of the nation's capital. And more reinforcements are reported on their way, some of them now crossing the Mississippi. This U . P. story to the Trenton Evening Times adds that before this business is over there are likely to be a hundred thousand or maybe two hundred thousand veterans in Washington.

One of the big catastrophes of the year was the explosion that occurred in Montreal today. It tore open an oil tanker in Montreal harbor, and produced an appalling list of casualties. At latest reports eight are known to be dead, fifteen missing and sixty-three injured. According to the New York World-Telegram, survivors of the explosion declare the scenes were worse than any they saw during the war. Two members of Montreal fire departments were killed and fifteen other firemen injured.

The first explosion is believed to have been caused by a hot rivet in the central fuel tank of the ship. Fire followed immediately. And then came explosion after explosion. In fact blasts were being heard from the docks an hour after the first roar shook the city.



LAUSANNE

Here's something from Europe that sounds rather serious. Five nations suspended all payments of all war debts and reparations today. So we learn in a United Press story from Lausanne to the Trenton Evening Times. The announcement was made jointly by Britain, France, Italy, Belgium and Japan. The other thirteen nations at the Conference were expected to agree. Uncle Sam is not represented officially at Lausanne. Debt payments to the United States naturally are not affected by this declaration.

LONDON

A United Ireland -- in fact the Republic of United Ireland - that is what the de Valera government wants of John Bull. This announcement was made in the House of Commons today by the Secretary for the Dominions, J. H. Thomas. According to a U.P. cable to the Pittsburg Press, Secretary Thomas added that President de Valera had been informed that no British Government ever would agree to such an idea. For one thing, Northern Ireland -- Ulster -- doesn't want it, and won't have it. So we wonder what will be the next stage in this drama. It looks like a deadlock.

CHILE

7.a.

More fireworks in Chile. Another hot time in Chile.

They've had another revolt -- a bloodless one for a change. It restored the moderate Socialist Government of Senor Carlos Davila, formerly Chilean ambassador to Washington. The new regime is purely nationalistic and is expected to be moderate. Senor Davila told a United Press correspondent, who flashed the news to the Trenton Times and other papers receiving the U.P. service, that there would be no military dictatorship. So it looks as though things are getting cooler in Chile.

DOG

There is one class of creatures who are already feeling the effect of Germany's new government. I mean the dogs. Owing to the high taxes their number is shrinking daily. According to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, the owners of the dogs just can't afford to keep them today. During the last few weeks an average of a hundred pets a day were delivered to the Berlin Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to be disposed of.

If you live in Berlin you have to pay a tax of \$15.00 a



year for your dog. If you have two, it costs you \$45.00, and for three you have to give the government \$90.00 and so on.

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In aviation circles all over the world the boys are doing a lot of ground flying today. They are speaking in tones of wonder about that speed boy over in Italy who has just smashed all flying records by flashing through the air at 434 miles an hour. Whistle! 434 miles an hour! The Italian flier's name is Lieutenant Neri.

Oh, yes, and Amelia Earhart Putnam is on the ocean bound for home, and aviation folks are getting ready for a whale of a reception when she comes in on the Paris next Monday.

June 17,  
1932.  
Stories re  
conventions



Well, that's what went on in the world outside. But I haven't got over all the fun I had in Chicago. (Yesterday, the final day, I decided to sit between two convention veterans. I wanted to get their reaction. I wanted them to tell me the difference between this and other conventions. So I sat next to Willis J. Abbott, one of the distinguished editors of the Christian Science Monitor, nephew of the great Lyman Abbott. Willis Abbott has a grey pointed Van Dyke beard and looks more like a Kentucky colonel than like a Bostonian. On the other side of me was my old friend, Grove Patterson, the famous mid-western editor -- from Toledo, Ohio.

The nomination speeches for Vice-President were going on. And they were pretty dull. I asked Abbott and Patterson what difference there was in the present day brand of oratory, and the speaking at other conventions. Both agreed that the loud speakers, the amplifiers, had killed convention oratory. The amplifiers make it too impersonal, too mechanical.

Mr. Abbott mentioned another reason for the speaking being less effective at a modern convention: the enormous size

of the room, and the number of people. He said the two most thrilling conventions he could remember were Democratic ones: The time when Bryan was nominated after his famous speech, and the Convention at Madison Square Garden when Al Smith was chosen.

He told me an absorbingly interesting story about the dramatic way in which Bryan burst upon the national political stage. Bryan was just a young man. He wasn't even a full-fledged delegate, just an alternate. And Mr. Abbott, then a young editor, roomed with him in Chicago during the Convention.

Three days before the Convention young Bryan said to Abbott:

"I've got a speech prepared that will get me the nomination for the Presidency, if I just get a chance to make it."

Abbott laughed. He didn't think the youngster from Nebraska had a chance because he was merely an alternate. So how could he make a speech?

But the miracle happened. One of the Nebraska delegates got drunk. And didn't show up. So young Bryan became the delegate in his place at the last minute. And then he made his famous



Cross-of-Gold speech.

Editor Abbott said that this present G.O.P. Convention was the dullest he had attended in fifty-two years, and he has attended them all, Republican, Democrat and Populist.

I was glad to catch a glimpse of an old acquaintance, Colonel William Donovan, more popularly known as "Wild Bill." Actually there is very little "wild" about him. Of course he was a wild fighting man in the World War. He won the Congressional Medal of Honor and a score of other decorations for valor. But "Wild Bill" is one of the most amiable and jovial public figures in America.

"Wild Bill" was not as prominent at this convention as he was at the last one in 1928. Four years ago he was one of the mainstays of the President. In fact, he was considerably responsible for the election of Mr. Hoover. But a good deal of water has run under the bridge since then. Colonel Bill Donovan for some reason or other is now on the outside looking in.



I met another interesting delegate at the Convention, Colonel Fred Dow of Portland, Maine, ninety-two years old, a veteran of Republican conventions ever since 1880. But here's the interesting point:- Colonel Dow is the son of General Neale Dow, the father of Prohibition, author of the first Prohibition law, enacted by the State of Maine in 1851 -- repealed five years later.

Ninety-two year old Colonel Fred Dow sticks firmly to the faith of his father. He's absolutely dry -- drier than some of those speeches we heard at the convention.

Oh yes, and there is another name to add to the list of pretty girls who were attracted to Chicago by the Convention. Her name is On Young Koo -- as pretty a Chinese girl as I ever saw in China or out of China. She is the daughter of the late Chinese Secretary of Foreign Affairs. On Young Koo is on her way home to Shanghai after going to school in the land of Uncle Sam.



One actor who took part in the big G.O.P. Summer Revue came near grabbing all the attention for a little while. Perhaps I should say actress instead of actor, because her name was Susie.

Susie had a grand time on the night of the wet and dry debate and also yesterday when nominations were being made. Susie is the Stadium's mascot. She is the pet monkey of the establishment and lives there all the time. Susie was shimmying up the flagpoles, swinging by her tail from the chandeliers and chattering so excitedly that some of the visitors suggested that Susie had a little bun on. This was vehemently denied by Susie's keepers. Susie, they protested, does not drink. Susie is a dry.

I saw one sight in Chicago that gave me a smile. On the way in from the Stadium there was a huge sign. In enormous letters it implored us, both visitors and natives, to boost Chicago. It was signed "Anton Cermak, Mayor."

About a block lower down there was another sign, a larger sign. In still huger letters it begged and beseeched us to -- rescue Chicago. The author of that sign was a civic organization.

Incidentally, Chicago's chief of detectives issued advice to all persons and companies who keep large sums of money in their offices, to install bullet-proof glass.

Well, there you have two aspects of Chicago.

As for myself, I was with the Mayor at lunch at the Palmer House, and he filled me full of the spirit of the new Chicago. I don't mean what you mean. I mean enthusiasm.

Oh yes, and just as I was leaving the N.B.C. studios to catch the New York train, the taxi driver pointed to a corner. Said he:- "While you were broadcasting tonight, three men were shot right over there." And when I got the morning papers in Pittsburg I found a confirmation on the first page.



SUMMARY

17.

Now that the Convention is over, just what were the final results? Well, here, briefly, is what happened:-

The Republicans of course, renominated Hoover and Curtis. They made Everett Sanders of Indiana, campaign manager. ( They adopted a platform calling on Congress to submit an amendment to the conventions of the various states, permitting the states to restore the liquor traffic -- subject to Federal control. Otherwise known as the "amphibian plank," but in reality a victory for the wets. The elephant has become web-footed.) It approved an emergency relief fund for making emergency loans to states. It declared for a shorter week for labor in order to supply more jobs. Also drastic slashing of public expenditure. More aid for farmers through the Fam Board. Full aid to veterans who cannot work because of wounds or damaged health. But no reference to the bonus. Extension of tariff protection to aid more of our industries. A Navy equal to any in the world. Provision for Uncle Sam's entry into the World Court. Revision of banking laws. Retention of the gold standard. Kidnapping to be stamped out. And there you are. Now, the next move is up to the Democrats.

From Chicago I hear that a lot of the boys who stayed behind are still grouching over the results. Some are grouching over the renomination of Mr. Curtis -- for which, incidentally, Big Chief Charlie owes considerable thanks to the Pennsylvania delegation. Others are throwing brickbats at the new campaign manager, Everett Sanders of Indiana.

Meanwhile we hear from Washington that President Hoover has cancelled his proposed trip to California. He will stay on the job, batting whenever his managers call him to the plate. Now all that is necessary is to notify Messrs. Hoover and Curtis that they have been nominated. Of course this is still a big secret. They have only heard it in three ways:- radio, newspapers, and telegraphic notification by Chairman Snell. But all that doesn't count. They can't believe it until the committee waits upon them, officially, to bring them the big news.

Appropos of this the boys are recalling the historic anecdote about President Zachary Taylor. The committee notified General Taylor of his nomination by mail. But he didn't get the word for several weeks. The letter lay in the Post Office all that time. It seems the thrifty committee had sent the letter collect -- which could



be done in those days. And the General had been getting so many  
colle t letters that he grew impatientand notified the Post Master  
not to deliver any more.

And now let's go from the G.O.P. elephant to the Pennsylvania Bear. Here's a story that has nothing to do with either politics, prohibition or depression. I read it on the train coming over the Alleghanies. It seems the Pennsylvania bears are changing their diet once more.

The Harrisburg Evening Telegraph informs us that Brother Bear is quite a problem to the government of the state of William Penn. The Pennsylvania bears are too much addicted to mutton and honey. You can't blame them, since Pennsylvania mutton is notoriously the best in the United States. But the trouble is that the bears don't pay their dinner checks after they eat.

So the State of Pennsylvania has to pay for the meals which the bears snatch from the farmers. During the first four months of the year no claims were filed with the State Game Commission. But now that good Spring lamb is with us once more, the Big Bruins have returned to their favorite dish. And the state has to pay the bills for the sheep they eat and the beehives they destroy.

I wonder how honey tastes with Spring lamb.